302 For festive occasions, some women bear paintings on their faces, white or ocher dots above the bridge of the nose, under the [517] cheeks, and on their chins. These paintings have only an aesthetic nature, or so it seems.

304 All Tuareg, men and women, have two or three small linear 751 scars on their foreheads and temples, and the indigo from their clothing which is often inlaid there gives them the appearance of tattoos. They are incisions made for medico-magic reasons when [855] the children are very young to protect them from headaches and convulsions.

[856] It also seems that this custom contributes to make them strong and making them walk very early. (1)

1. De Foucauld, Textes en prose /Prose Texts/, p. 64.

757 Medicine and surgery. -- If we now turn our attention to medicine and surgery among the Tuareg, we shall observe that their knowledge is not very extensive and has nothing singular about it.

753 In their minds the Tuareg classify sickness in two categories: those which are the result of an external action, visible and determinable, and those whose origin cannot be explained by any causal link. The former are treated with appropriate medical treatments, the latter by magic procedures.

757 The medical procedures, which belong rather to surgery, are clearly empirical. A few of them serve for a quantity of ills. They chiefly include bleeding and applying heat. In bleeding, the operator relieves congestion in the diseased part; in applying heat, he limits the pain, at the same time relieving congestion.

278 The Ihaggaren have a whole stock of drugs which they [277] borrowed from the Sudanese. These are roots, plants, and seeds which grow in the Sudan and in which the Tuareg have a great deal

844 the child is in a good position; she also rolls her on the ground to put the child in place if need be, but she never makes a vaginal exploration.

845 [751] If the birth does not go normally, the midwife may ask the marabout's help. The latter comes and stands outside the tent, giving verbal advice but never intervening personally; he cannot go near the parturient woman.

844 To give birth the woman squats down on her knees and braces herself on the center stake of the tent. Generally /283/ the baby falls on a layer of fine sand which has been prepared for that purpose. The midwife immediately cuts the umbilical cord, washes the baby in warm water, and makes him cry by pinching him to make sure he is alive. Then the mother takes him, puts a bit of her milk in [856] his nostrils, stretches his nose so that it will be long and narrow, and presses his head between her hands to give it an elongated shape. [174] This custom is certainly a vestige of cranial deformation, which is no longer practiced among the Tuareg but which was formerly common among the Egyptians.

As soon as the father learns of the birth of the baby, he has a sheep butchered and sends it to the wife's camp. The sheep is meant 846 to feed her and the people who have assisted her. The woman is made to absorb a great deal of meat bouillon. Sometimes the new mother gets up two or three days after confinement.

851 [842] [582] The birth of a boy is welcomed with more joy than that of a girl. In the first case, all the people, men and women, come to congratulate the mother, but if it is a girl only the women come to see her. During this visit the women often put yellow ocher under [751] their eyes and around their mouths to keep away the bad genii which are always supposed to prowl around in tents where a newborn baby has just arrived.

846 On the seventh day after the birth, the woman returns to her husband's camp, accompanied by the women of her family and her brothers, if she has any. The father then sees his child for the first time.